

FORM H – PARKS AND LANDSCAPES

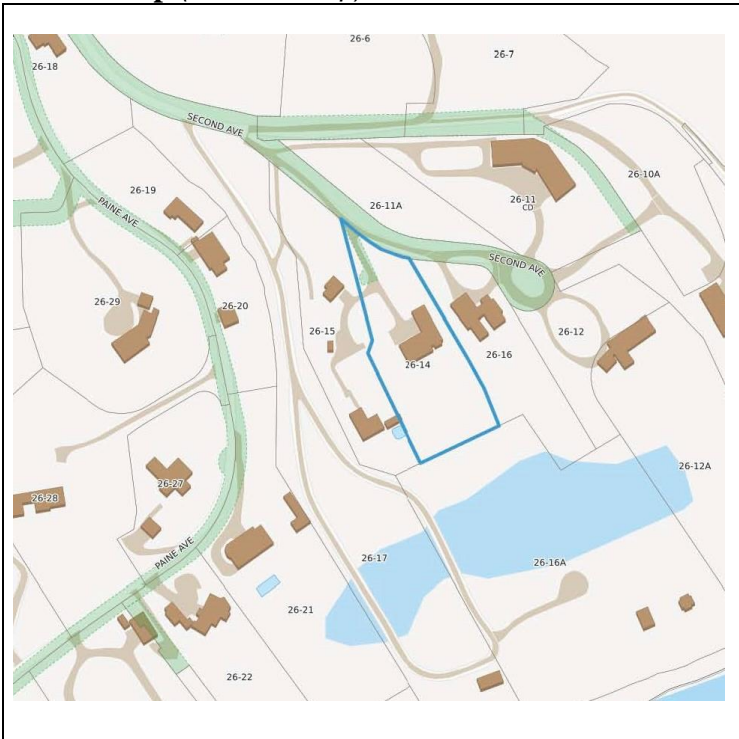
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Photo 1. View looking northwest from terrace towards house.

Locus Map (North is at top)



Assessor's Number Area(s) Form No. Forms within

26-14

BEV.T

BEV.9010

Town/City: Beverly

Place (*neighborhood or village*): Beverly Farms, Pride's Crossing

Address or Location: 73 Paine Avenue

Name: Swiftmoor (E. C. Swift Estate)

Ownership: ☐ Public ☒ Private

Type of Landscape (*check one*):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> park | <input type="checkbox"/> farm land |
| <input type="checkbox"/> green/common | <input type="checkbox"/> mine/quarry |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> garden | <input type="checkbox"/> training field |
| <input type="checkbox"/> boulevard/parkway | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other (<i>specify</i>): | |

Date or Period: 1902

Sources:

Southern Essex District Registry of Deeds;
North Shore Boston Houses of Essex County, 1865-1930,
Pamela W. Fox

Account Books of Little & Browne, Historic New England

Landscape Architect: Little & Browne

Location of Plans: Unknown

Alterations/Intrusions (*with dates*):

Mid-1900s:

- Original house demolished
- Property sub-divided
- Formal gardens and many plantings removed

Condition: Very good

Acreage: 1.308

Setting:

At the end of Paine Avenue on a promontory overlooking West Beach and the Atlantic Ocean

Recorded by: Martha Lyon & Wendy Frontiero

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): February 2019

INVENTORY FORM H CONTINUATION SHEET

BEVERLY

73 PAINE AVENUE

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

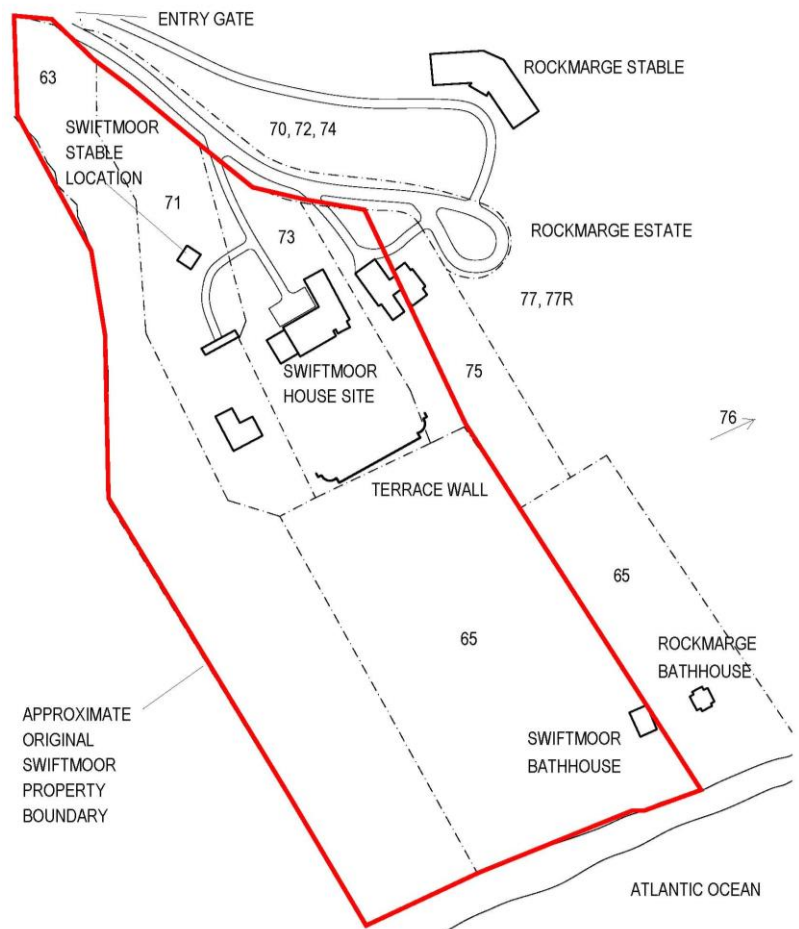
Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

VISUAL/DESIGN ASSESSMENT

Describe topography and layout. Note structures such as bandstands, gazebos, sheds, stone walls, monuments, and fountains. Note landscaping features such as formal plantings, agricultural plantings, and bodies of water. If possible, compare current appearance with original.

The 1.308-acre property at 73 Paine Avenue in the Beverly Farms/Pride's Crossing area of Beverly represents a small piece of the original Swiftmoor estate, the summer home designed by the Boston-based architecture firm of Little and Browne for Edwin C. Swift and built between 1900 and 1902. This property once included the acreage of 63, 71, 73, as well as portions of 65 and 75 Paine Avenue. Access to Swiftmoor was shared with Rockmarge, the estate of William Moore that abutted Swiftmoor's east side¹ also designed by Little and Browne around the same time. The original Swiftmoor house was demolished in the mid-20th century and a smaller home was constructed in its place.² Within the 73 Paine Avenue parcel are the original driveway on the north side of the house, earthen terraces extending off the south side of the house, granite block retaining wall supporting the southernmost of the terraces, and mature plant materials along driveway, below the wall, and framing the house's east and west sides.

The property lies at the end of Paine Avenue overlooking West Beach and the Atlantic Ocean. A private way, Paine Avenue (also referred to as Second Avenue) intersects Hale Street in the center of Pride's Crossing and proceeds southward toward the ocean. A pair of granite block columns topped with pineapple-shaped granite finials and curbing granite block walls, designed in ca. 1901 by Little and Browne as part of the Rockmarge estate, mark the entrance the Paine Avenue. Visitors to the property pass through the columns and proceed down a shaded drive and reach a second set of entry gates marking the drives into 73 Paine Avenue and abutting properties. The gates (Photo 2), also designed by Little and Browne, consist of 48" square, seven feet high granite columns with pyramidal-shaped granite caps topped with bronze lanterns. A set of wrought iron gates fill the span between the columns. "ROCKMARGE" is inscribed in the left (east) column just below the cap.



The former Swiftmoor estate approximately encompassed the area outlined in red. The 1.308 acres at 73 Paine Avenue held the original Swiftmoor house and south-facing terrace.

¹ Rockmarge consisted of the parcels at 70, 72, 74, 76, 77, and 77R and well as portions of 65 and 75 Paine Avenue.

² The main block of the house that replaced Swiftmoor may be a section of the former Rockmarge stable, moved from its original site on the Rockmarge estate.

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Inside the gates, the drive divides with one drive leading eastward to the former Rockmarge estate area, and the other drive proceeding straight (southward) toward 73 and 71 Paine Avenue. Mature rhododendron shrubs and shade trees line the 150-foot-long drive into the residence at 73 Paine Avenue. At the end of the drive is an asphalt-paved auto court for vehicle parking. A third driveway, located approximately eighty feet along 73 Paine Avenue driveway, leads westward to 71 Paine Avenue. This driveway once provided access to the Swiftmoor stable and is lined on its west side with a curving 24" height mortared granite block wall (now part of the 71 Paine Avenue parcel). The existing residence at 73 Paine Avenue extends across most of the width of the parcel, obscuring views from the auto court towards the ocean. To reach the south side of the house, visitors must follow narrow grassy paths along the east and west sides of the house.

Topography across the property rolls gently southward from the entry gates towards the auto court and house. Land to the south of the house has been graded into two terraces to accommodate the steeper grades. The upper terrace contains the house and approximately fifty feet of gently sloping grass lawn. The lower terrace, also surfaced with grass lawn, is supported along its south end by a mortared granite block retaining wall (Photo 2). This prominent structure has a rusticated finish and ranges from approximately six to ten feet in height with a 24-inch wide granite capstone. A three-foot high wrought iron picket style fence, set into the capstone, trims the top of the wall. A pair of planters, set on six-foot diameter octagonal bases, stand at the far outer corners of the terrace, each containing a dwarf Alberta spruce tree. Views are possible from the upper and lower terraces of the broad grassy lawn leading down to the ocean (part of 65 Paine Avenue), two historic bathhouses that were once part of the Rockmarge and Swiftmoor estates, a seawall, as well 180-degree views of Great Misery, Baker's and other smaller islands in Salem Channel and the Atlantic (Photo 4).

While historic photos document that much of the original plant material has been removed from the property, several mature species survive along the edges. On the west side of the house is a mature katsura tree, several rhododendrons, an eastern white cedar, and a sourwood. Below the lower terrace at the base of the west side of the wall are several mugo pines and junipers, and a thick wisteria vine grows near the eastern side of the wall. Mature rhododendrons line the driveway.

Due to the subdivision of the original estate into several smaller properties, much of the Swiftmoor landscape is no longer extant. A formal entry drive ending in a cul-du-sac containing a fountain has been replaced by the smaller auto court, and a simple wrought iron railing stands in place of an ornate wooden balustrade atop the granite retaining wall. A planting of evergreen trees and shrubs at the base of the granite wall has been diminished to just a few pines and junipers. What remains most prominently are the entry columns (Photo 2), granite retaining wall (Photo 3), and the long views from the terraces looking southward to the ocean (Photo 4).

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss history of use. Evaluate the historical associations of the landscape/park with the community.

Prior to the mid-19th century, the Pride's Crossing area of Beverly was largely farmed. In 1838, the first train ran from Boston to Salem, and a few years later, the line extended to Beverly. This allowed easy access to property along the North Shore, enticing the wealthy to purchase land and build summer estates. In 1844, Boston lawyer Charles Cushing Paine bought "101 acres and 159 poles" of land in Pride's Crossing from a farmer named Isaac Prince. The 1872 Beers Atlas of Beverly shows Paine's property containing a house near the ocean and the adjacent coastline labeled as "Paine's Head." Between 1872 and 1897, the property passed from C. C. Paine to his son, Robert Treat Paine, who is shown as the owner on the 1897 Atlas of Beverly. During the Paine family's ownership, Log Brook flowed through the property between the house and the ocean and terminated at West Beach, to the east of the property.

On April 1, 1899, Paine sold the property to Edwin Carleton Swift. Born in 1846 on a farm in Sagamore, Massachusetts, E. C. Swift with his brother, Gustavus, founded the Chicago-based Swift Bros and Company meat-packing business in 1875. As young men, both brothers had peddled meat to local farms on Cape Cod, and Gustavus, seven years Edwin's senior, had opened a butchering business in 1855 which eventually led him, with Edwin, to pursue the business in the Midwest. The Swifts pioneered the use of refrigerated railcars to transport meat from the Midwest to the Northeast, further contributing to the success of the enterprise. Swift & Company remains in operation to this day.

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After purchasing the Paine property, E. C. commissioned the Boston-based architecture firm of Little and Browne to design a three-story Neoclassical style mansion with a veranda extending across the full length of the building on the ocean-facing side. Below the veranda was a flat grassy lawn, supported by a high granite retaining wall (Photo 3). Little and Browne also designed a gate to mark the estate entrance (Photo 2) as well as a stable and a bathhouse (Photo 4) both matching the house in Neoclassical style, and a “party wall” separating the adjacent Rockmarge estate from Swiftmoor. Formal garden spaces surrounded the house and filled the level area at the base of the retaining wall. Photographs taken ca. 1910 show a drive circling around the front of the house, with a fountain and a pair of elm trees in the center of the circle. Low evergreen shrubs trimmed the front foundation and topiary shrubs dotted the lawn on the terrace. On the ocean side, below the granite wall, an elaborate planting of evergreen trees and shrubs filled a portion of the lawn and leafy vines climbed up the wall, covering the lower portion of the granite blocks. At some point during the Swifts’ development of the estate, Log Brook was placed underground to create a large, open grassy lawn, extending to the seawall. Adjacent to the stable complex stood a walled parterre-style garden with a vine-covered pergola, gravel paths, topiary shrubs, perennials and a centrally placed reflecting pool, complete with a putti fountain and lily pads. (Photos 5 and 6) The account books of Little and Browne indicated that costs of landscape construction exceeded \$60,000.

The account books of the Boston-based Little & Browne indicate that the firm designed the landscape as well as the house, and it is likely that Browne had a hand in creating the landscape. Herbert Wheildon Cotton Browne (1860 – 1946), was educated as an architect at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and studied in Paris and Florence. After serving as a draftsman for two years, he partnered in 1890 with architect Arthur Little, forming the Boston-based firm of Little and Browne. In addition to working with Little on many homes in the Boston area and on the North Shore, Browne designed several landscapes, including the gardens of the Spaulding brothers at Sunset Rock in Beverly Farms and Norman garden at Bee Rock, Beverly Cove.

E. C. Swift died unexpectedly of pneumonia just four years after the house was completed, but his widow, Florence, continued to summer at the property until her own death in 1915. The property then passed to the Swifts’ daughter, Mabelle Swift Wichfeld. Mabelle’s first husband, Clarence Moore, died in the sinking of the Titanic, and Mabelle married Aksel Wichfeld, a New York banker, three years later. Sometime between 1915 and 1932, a rose garden may have been constructed adjacent to the south side of the house, extending eastward toward to the sea (located on 63 and 65 Paine Avenue). In 1929, Mabelle and Aksel mortgaged the property, and in August of 1932, Mrs. William (Ada Small) Moore purchased the property from the mortgage holder, the Provident Institution for Savings. Mabelle died a year later. In the mid-1900s, the house was demolished and the larger property was subdivided into the several lots that today hold 63, 71, 73, and portions of 65 and 75 Paine Avenue.

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Maps

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George H. Walker & Company, Atlas of the City of Beverly, Massachusetts. 1897.

George H. Walker & Company, Atlas of the City of Beverly, Massachusetts. 1907.

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<https://beverlyma.mapgeo.io> (City of Beverly GIS-based mapping)

Deeds (Southern Essex District Registry)

Book 344, Page 150, Isaac Prince to Charles C. Paine, May 3, 1844

Book 1578, Page 366, Robert Treat Paine to E. C. Swift, March 27, 1899

Book 1632, Page 390, E. C. Swift to A. S. Moore, February 1, 1901

Book 2824, Page 220, Provident Institution for Savings to same, August 8, 1932

Book 2924, Page 224, Provident Institution for Savings to Asa Small Moore, August 8, 1932

Architectural Drawings, Photographs, and Account Books, Collection of Historic New England

"Elevation of Party Wall between Estates of E. C. Smith & W. H. Moore," Little and Browne, ND

"Entrance Gates to Estate of E. C. Swift Esq.," Little and Browne, ND

Little and Brown account book, 1902

Swiftmoor garden and side elevation (photographs), ca 1906

Newspaper Articles

"E. C. Swift's Body Taken to Beverly," The New York Times, April 6, 1906

"E. C. Swift had \$10,000,000," The New York Times, April 8, 1906

"Funeral of Edwin C. Swift," The New York Times, April 9, 1906

"Mrs. Wichfeld Dead; Was Visiting Friends," The New York Times, February 4, 1933

Websites

<https://tclf.org/pioneer/herbert-w-c-browne>

SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 2. The entrance gates to Swiftmoor, designed by Little and Browne, taken from the north side, looking south.



Photo 3. The rusticated granite block retaining wall, taken from the south side, looking north.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES, CONTINUED



Photo 4. A view of the bathhouses for the Swiftmoor (right) and Rockmarge (left) estates and Atlantic Ocean in the distance, taken from the terrace, looking east.

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Photo 5. Swiftmoor, ca. 1906, taken from the northwest side looking northward toward the carriage house, across the parterre garden. (Collection of Historic New England)



Photo 6. Swiftmoor, ca 1906, taken from the south side of the house looking northward, across the parterre garden towards to front door. (Collection of Historic New England)